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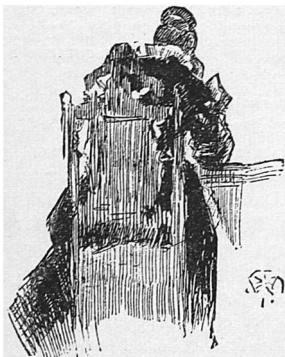
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New Publications.

ABERRATIONS OF MR. WHISTLER.



There are few men living who have contributed so much to the world's amusement as Mr. James McNeil Whistler. Whether he wields the etching-point or the pen; whether he throws pots of paint in the face of the public, as Mr. Ruskin has said, or pours out the vials of his wrath on the critics; whether he attempts a lawsuit or a lecture, he never fails to amuse, and he not seldom conveys sound instruction. His whims and his affections have endeared him to the newspaper readers of two continents; his water-colors and his etchings are admired by crowds and enjoyed by a few. Himself as wholly artificial as a character in a puppet-play, his art is like nature, at least in its frankness and simplicity. But the serious qualities which he undoubtedly has are, when recognized at all, apt to lead one too far in admiration of him. One usually approaches him with misgiving, and is first amused, then attracted, finally impressed by him; and there are many who take his paradoxes on art as words of pure wisdom. These last we would here put on their guard by showing them that even when Whistler is most sincere and most rational he is a very unsafe guide, and, like a will-o-the-wisp, is most like to lead into the ditch when he appears to shine most brightly.

His greatest error is beyond question the theory, which he seems to hold in its extreme form, of "art for art's sake." Because art is something apart from morality, we are asked to ignore the possible moral or immoral influence of works of art. Because painting has its own peculiar means of expression, its own ways of affecting those to whom it is addressed—consequently its own range of subject matter, which can be rendered by those means and which can affect us in those ways—because of this all the qualities which link painting to the other arts, to literature especially, must be regarded as non-existent. It is by arrangements and harmonies of color that painting follows nature and touches humanity. Therefore, in painting, the arrangements and harmonies of color alone are to be considered. We must think of the means and their mode of employment only; not of the result, not even of the aim. Of his portrait of his mother exhibited at the Royal Academy as an "Arrangement in White and Black," he says: "Now that is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of the portrait? It must stand or fall on its merits as an arrangement." Again, of his "Harmony in Gray and Gold," a snow-scene with a single dark figure and a lighted tavern. "Now that, to me, is a harmony of color only. I care nothing for the past, present or future of the black figure, placed there because the black was wanted at that spot. All that I know is that my combination of gray and gold satisfies my artistic feeling." His friends wished him to call it "Trotty Veck," after the character in Dickens. He replied that he would consider that a trick; that the picture should never depend on any dramatic or legendary or local interest, nor on emotions "entirely foreign" to art, such as devotion, pity, love, patriotism.

We may admit that, as regards Mr. Whistler's own work, there is truth in all this. It would be a "vulgar trick" for him to name his picture "Trotty Veck," just as it was a vulgar error of the Berners Street Gallery people to name his "Girl in White," "The Woman in White," as if it were meant for the heroine of Wilkie Collins's novel. Even his portrait of his mother, though it is certainly interesting as a picture of an old lady, is perhaps more so as an "arrangement in black and grey." But if we leave aside Mr. Whistler and a few others who appeal to little else than our aesthetic sensibilities, how false his rule of art appears. Must we look upon Raphael's Transfiguration and Michael Angelo's Last Judgment as arrangements? And, to descend nearer to Mr. Whistler's level, are the expressive faces of Greuze and of Prudhon bad art; and is Hogarth's "Election Day" mere vulgar trickery? We are, indeed, of the opinion that it was but the trace of sentiment in the "Harmony in Gray and Gold," denied by Mr. Whistler himself, but perceived by his friends, that lifted that production above the level of an artistic plaything.

Another paradox of Mr. Whistler's, contained in his definition of "finish," appears at first as inapplicable to his own pictures as his notions of the unimportance of anything but color arrangements are to other works of art. "A picture is finished," he exclaimed at the Ruskin trial, "when all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared." It will seem at first ridiculously easy to trace the means which Mr. Whistler uses; his pigments, his lines, every turn of his technique are plainly confessed. But that is only if we take him at his word when he speaks of the end he has in view. It is by no means difficult to analyze his color arrangements; but to account for the animation of his crowds of microscopic figures; for the delicacy of the sentiment which sometimes disengages itself from his slight studies of the nude; for the air and the sunshine in his landscapes; the mystery in his "nocturnes," is another matter. If these be the end, then it is proper to say that the touch which does the work makes it impossible to trace how the work has been done. The same is true of much more elaborate works than his. The patient and refined drawing of some of the Renaissance masters, of Jean Cousin for instance, does not any the more explain the result achieved by them.

His theory that the public has, and should have no influence on art has made a convert in an unexpected quarter. Professor Mahaffy agrees with Mr. Whistler in thinking that even the Greek public understood its artists badly, and exerted no influence on them. It follows from this theory that the popularization of art is a delusion; that whether art languishes or flourishes matters nothing to the public. It is hardly worth while to offset the half truth in this statement by the other half. Art is always enjoyed in a variety of ways by various people, and their enjoyment reacts upon the artist.

But we have said enough to show that Mr. Whistler habitually regards general principles from a narrow personal standpoint. For his minor vagaries we refer the reader to the collection of his writings, with hitherto unpublished letters and anecdotes, just issued by John W. Lovell Company, under the title of "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," the perusal of which highly entertaining volume has called forth these reflections. We find here among other delightful trifles, Whistler's estimate of himself as "Master of all that is flippant and fine in art," of Oscar Wilde, "The amiable, irresponsible, esurient Oscar, with no more sense of a picture than of the fit of a coat," and of J. C. Horsley, R.A., apropos of an attack by that artist on painters of the nude, "Horsley soit qui mal y pense."

In addition to the popular edition of the book, the John W. Lovell Company announces an "édition de luxe," limited to three hundred copies, printed on Holland paper, each numbered and signed by Mr. Whistler.

THE HISTORY OF ART FOR CLASSES, ART STUDENTS AND TOURISTS IN EUROPE, by W. H. Goodyear, B.A., is one of the most comprehensive books on the subject, as it includes a good general view of the principal styles of architecture from the Egyptian to the modern Renaissance, with descriptions of the principal buildings in each, and a similar treatment of sculpture and painting. A short introduction to each part puts the student at once in possession of the main facts. Each of the great periods in the history of the art in question is then passed in review, and, in coming down to modern times, the influence of the past on the present is carefully pointed out. The use of "headed" headlines facilitates reference to the passages devoted to particular artists and their works. We are glad to see that a new edition of this really useful work has been prepared, and to note the addition of many illustrations, which add much to its value. But while printing seems to us superior in general to that of the first edition, we cannot approve the indiscriminate use of colored inks, which give the work somewhat the appearance of a printer's or ink manufacturer's book of samples. (A. S. Barnes & Co.)

EXPIATION, by Octave Thanet (Miss Alice French), gives a graphic description of life in the rural districts at the South during the war, when, owing to the absence in the Confederate army of the better men, lawless bands of guerrillas held the country at their mercy, and robbery and murder were rife. The story was first published as a serial in Scribner's Magazine, and called forth some expressions of surprise, at the time of its appearance, that scenes and characters like those described should have been treated so powerfully by the pen of a young woman. The plot, although slight, is interesting; the characters are, for the most part, well drawn; the story moves with rapidity, and the style is fresh and vigorous. It is to be regretted, however, that the author should have allowed race prejudice—and perhaps a dramatic instinct for contrasts—to lead her into the portrayal of a character so unnatural as that of Dick Barnabas. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

EKKEHARD, a translation in two volumes, from the German of Joseph Victor von Scheffel, is a story of the early middle ages, whose fidelity to historical truth is vouched for by the fact that it is founded upon and follows closely in its action, authentic historical documents, while the characters and events with which it deals are treated with a freshness and vigor that invest them with a living interest. Hadwig, the proud Duchess of Suabia, Ekkehard, passing from the quiet cloisters of St. Gall to the chancellorship of a kingdom, the Abbot Cralo, the Irish priest Moengal, Burkhard, the cloister pupil, Spazzo, the chamberlain, Praxedes, the Greek maiden, Audifax and the rest, are made to enact their parts again for our pleasure on this earthly scene, and the shores of the "shimmering Bodensee, majestic and beautiful" as when their eyes rested with delight upon its waters, and the Hohentwiel, "among whose ruins the goats now graze peacefully," are animated for us, as they were for the chronicler of their fates, by these long departed shades. (W. S. Gottsberger & Co., New York.)

TWO WOMEN OR ONE? by Henry Harland (Sidney Lusk), is a powerfully written story, which recalls, in its realistic method of treatment of a somewhat fantastic plot, Hugh Conway's "Called Back." This does not mean that Mr. Harland's story is, in any sense, an imitation. On the contrary, one of its most striking qualities is its originality, and, indeed, the field from which the materials for its construction are gathered—the romantic possibilities of science—is as yet fruitful enough in original themes to make it unnecessary for the novelist to have recourse to those already used. The psychological problem—which is one of peculiar interest—on which the plot turns, is presented with all that dramatic power and skill characteristic of Mr. Harland, and the story, from the first page to the last, is absorbingly interesting. (Casell Publishing Company, New York.)

THE IDLE THOUGHTS OF AN IDLE FELLOW, by Jerome K. Jerome, have at least the merit of being only in part what they are called. Mr. Jerome's idleness strikes us as a particularly busy form of idleness, and the idleness of these thoughts of his is also far from absolute. "This book wouldn't elevate a cow," he says. But why should it? If it raises a laugh, that we take it, is more to the purpose. His lucubrations, in fact, are mostly on subjects which would not concern a cow in the least—such as "Being in Love," "Being in the Blues," "Being Hard Up," and "Dress and Deportment." Occasionally Mr. Jerome's fancies take on a melancholy tinge, as when he bewails the difference between a melancholy in the country and the same weather in the city. But usually his remarks may be described as commonplace exaggerated to a humorous degree. The essay on "Furnished Apartments," for instance, reads at first as tamely as a notice of "Rooms to Let," which has been long exposed on the door jamb. But on looking it over again, which of us can recall an experience as grotesque as that of the room where the bed was always in the way? In short, Mr. Jerome improves on acquaintance, and we second his recommendation of it in his preface—"When you get tired of reading the best hundred books, you may take up this for half an hour. It will be a change." (Henry Holt.)

AMONG novelties in decorated china seen at Ovington Brothers lately is an exquisite fish set in Limoges ware, ornamented with sea-weed and fish. The fish glow with opalescent tints and the sea-weed is executed in gold and green, the green under the gold forming its shadow color. The borders of the plates and dishes are delicately tinted with pink and green blend, and lavishly gilded. The set consists of platter, twelve plates, a sauce-boat with tray, and a potato dish.

Some Royal Dresden mug-shaped chocolate cups powdered with small sprays of bright flowers, with saucers decorated to match, are very beautiful and not extravagant in price. Others of similar shape, richly embossed with dull gold in a chaste design, are much more costly.

A "five o'clock tea" set in modern Dresden is decorated with tiny flowers and miniature Watteau subjects in small medallions, two of these on each cup and the same number on each saucer. Some Staffordshire bouillon cups, with double handles, are exquisitely engraved with gold in a conventional style, and enriched with turquoise.

A unique and charming set of oyster plates in Coalport china, specially designed for the Ovingtons, has groups of raised seaweed, with flat spaces between for the oysters to rest on. The seaweed is tinted in brilliant, yet delicate shades of green, pink and brown. The glaze on this particular make of china, which comes from the Welsh coast, is very fine. Exquisite dessert plates, also of Coalport china, in cream color and gold, richly wrought in a conventional pattern of raised and flat gold in medallions, scrolls and flowers, were seen at the same place. An entirely different style of dessert plate has ground of rich old Derby blue, with decorations of gold and raised white enamel.

Treatment of Designs.

BLUE TITMICE. (COLOR PLATE NO. 1.)

THE group of blue titmice—the last of the set of three panels—would be useful for many objects calling for decoration, particularly fans and hand-screens. The birds, of course, can be perched on a branch of any kind of shrub or flower other than that here represented.

For copying the panel as it is given, take a coarse-grained canvas, such as has already been recommended for the previous panels. Let the drawing in outline be carefully and neatly executed on it, whether drawn free-hand or transferred. Next lay in the sky-tint somewhat thinly as far down as the tree trunks extend. This tint partakes of a subdued sunset glow. Mix with a good proportion of white some cobalt and a very little Indian red, qualified with a touch of raw umber, if necessary. For the subdued distant greens, cobalt, yellow ochre and white, with a little lemon yellow and black worked in, will give the desired result, while raw umber, cobalt, black and white, will serve for the subdued shading of the tree trunks. For the foxgloves mix for the light shade white, with rose madder and a touch of raw umber. If too purple, introduce a little scarlet vermilion. For the sharp clear touches under the bells mix scarlet vermilion and crimson lake. The same colorings as those given for the distance, somewhat strengthened, appear in the foreground, with the addition of brighter greens for the brambles on which the birds are perched. These can be obtained with lemon yellow and black, lemon yellow or pale lemon chrome and raw Sienna, Antwerp blue and yellow ochre, indigo and raw Sienna, with burnt Sienna added in the very darkest shades, while in the reddish leaves, for the light tints, the local color for the foxgloves can be used. The other tints are composed of yellow, raw Sienna and burnt Sienna, with a touch of crimson lake in the reddest parts. For the titmice set your palette with lemon yellow, yellow ochre, raw Sienna, raw umber, Indian red, ivory black, white, cobalt and brown madder. Subdue the cobalt, blue and white with black and a touch of Indian red, if too cold, for the wings, heads and claws. For the sharp and dark markings take brown madder. For the breasts you have lemon yellow, black, white and a little raw umber in the shadows, with white and yellow ochre mixed for the highest lights. This gives the same tint as jaune brillant, and is less dangerous in use. The light green tints on the backs are obtained with lemon yellow, black and white, shaded with raw Sienna, the dark tints with cobalt mixed with yellow ochre. The pinkish gray on the back and tail of one of the birds can be gained with a mixture of cobalt, Indian red and white, or with brown madder and white. In painting these birds be sure that the work is crisp. Do not weaken the effect by too much attempt at finish. Let the shadows be thinly put on and load the high lights. Be very careful to preserve the feeling of the drawing throughout.

SCOTCH ROSES. (COLOR PLATE NO. 2.)

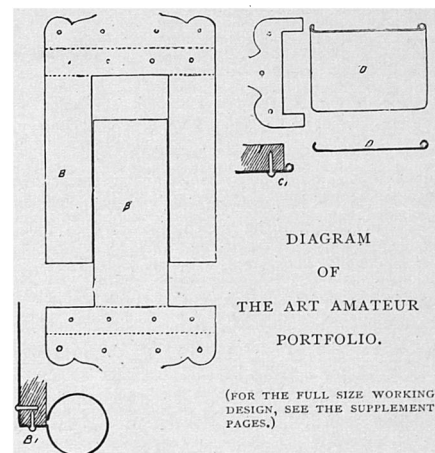
To paint the Scotch rose design for a cracker jar, by Mrs. H. A. Crosby, begin by drawing it carefully with India ink, taking care that the lines are not too heavy; otherwise they will not fire out. Then lay over the whole design a thin wash of mixing yellow. When this is thoroughly dried, which may be effected by placing the jar in a hot oven for a few minutes, proceed to paint in the darker shades with silver or jonquil yellow. For some of the darker shades use orange yellow, and for shadows use orange yellow and black mixed, or neutral gray. The centres are painted with yellow ochre. For the stems use a little deep blue green and red brown mixed, making a light gray, which serves as a high light on the stems. Shade with red brown or violet of iron. For the thorns use deep red brown.

For the high lights in the leaves use deep blue green mixed with very little brown green No. 6, and shade with brown green No. 6 and dark green No. 7 mixed. It gives an excellent effect to use as many greens as possible and they all mix and fire well together. Moss green, brown-green and olive green make a good combination; and deep blue green, brown green and dark green No. 7 can be used together with good effect. The jar may be tinted light blue by using a thin wash of ultramarine and deep blue green mixed in equal parts, with one third flux added.

Tinting is not used so much as formerly, except in Royal Worcester mat color, and that is more suitable for ornament than table use. We should prefer to use a spattering of gold or a simple gold etching design. Use only the mat gold, as the liquid gold has a cheap effect and does not wear well.

THE PORTFOLIO FOR THE ART AMATEUR.

THE covers are about 4 inch wood. Get a cylinder turned like A, with one of the knobs removable. Cut the hinges like B, B. Bend them at right angles on the dotted lines, and curve the straps in a circle as at B x. Take off the knob from the cylinder A and slip them on it in their proper order. They should fit snugly. When they are properly adjusted put on the knob and nail the hinges to the covers as shown. Cut the



clasp mounts like C, and bend the ends, as at C 1, tightly around pieces of strong wire, which at the back cover form the hinges of the clasps D, and in front catch the hooks of the clasps to secure the volume. The clasp D is a plain piece of metal bent closely around the wire at the back as a hinge, and bent enough to catch on the wire in front. The title may be carved, or it may be hammered or etched on a brass plate and nailed into the panel. The portfolio may be made of any desired capacity by having the cylinder, the diameter of which represents the space between the covers, made of proper size, with the clasps corresponding in length.